
ICANN79 | CF – Joint AFRALO-AfrICANN Meeting
Wednesday, March 6, 2024 – 3:00 to 4:00 SJU

AZIZ HILALI: Abdeldjalil, can you hear me? Abdeldjalil.

ABDELDJALIL BACHAR BONG: Yes, Professor Aziz. Yes, I'm in a discussion with Hadia.

AZIZ HILALI: Did you see the statement? It's eight pages.

ABDELDJALIL BACHAR BONG: Yes.

AZIZ HILALI: Eight pages. For me, it will be too long to read. It will take a lot of time, and it won't leave time for discussion.

ABDELDJALIL BACHAR BONG: So, what is the strategy now?

MICHELLE DESMYTER: We'll be starting here in two minutes. Please be seated. We'll be starting here in just a moment. All right, this session will now begin. Oh,

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one moment. All right, thank you. This session will now begin. Please start the recording.

MICHELLE DESMYTER:

Hello, and welcome to the joint AFRALO-AfriCANN meeting. My name is Michelle DeSmyter, and I'm a participation manager for this session. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior. During this session, questions or comments will only be read aloud if submitted within the Q&A pod located at the bottom of your Zoom screen.

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HADIA ELMINIAWI:

Thank you so much, Michelle, and welcome all to the AFRALO-AfriCANN meeting at ICANN79 in Puerto Rico. We have an interesting topic to discuss. We will discuss the opportunities, challenges, and impact of AI-empowered tools on the management of the DNS. But first, let's start by welcoming our guests today. I will list the names in the order or the sequence in which they appear on the agenda. So, today we have with us Jonathan Zuck, ALAC Chair.

Guest speakers, Sally Costerton, Interim President and CEO of ICANN. Alan Barrett, Board Director Member. Dr. Catherine Adeya, Board Director Member. León Felipe Sánchez, the At-Large Community Board Representative on the ICANN Board and Pierre Dandjinou, Vice President, Stakeholder Engagement. With that, I welcome you all to the session and hand it over to Jonathan. Jonathan, the floor is yours.

JONATHAN ZUCK:

Thank you, Hadia. My name is Jonathan Zuck, and I'm the Chair of the At-Large Advisory Committee, which is the representative of the broader At-Large community that exists around the world and includes these regional At-Large organizations, including the AFRALO from the African region. It's one of the more important regions within our community and within the Internet community for a number of reasons, because it's where a lot of the future growth associated with the Internet will take place.

As we try to go from five billion to six billion users on the Internet, much of that will take place in Africa. And so, I definitely welcome what I read in the statement about artificial intelligence and the role that it can play in improving the efficiencies of both DNS operations within Africa. I mean, I might add that as we explore topics such as the Applicant Support Program, that areas that AI might create cost efficiencies as well with registry-related services might make it more likely that a supported applicant takes their new top-level domain past the application process to the delegation process and into the future.

So, anything we can do to streamline the process of managing a top-level domain, I think, could be very powerful for the success of that

Applicant Support Program and the diversification of the registry community that we all seek as part of this next round, because the last round was not successful in that regard, and in many other regards as well, it turns out. So, I think it's very timely and very prescient to be talking about artificial intelligence and the role that it can play.

Obviously, as the debates go on, there's as many concerns about AI as there are promises to it, and so we'll have to be vigilant and diligent in the way that we implement artificial intelligence, particularly this generative artificial intelligence, in the work that we do. But I think the net benefit of integrating it into DNS management, into registry service management, can have enough of a positive impact that the risk is worth the reward. So, with that, I don't want to take any more of your time, but I'm really happy to have you all here together. I'm very proud of our African community within the At-Large community.

It's one of the most active when we do engagement on things like universal acceptance and other areas, and so I think it's really a continent brimming with potential, both in the At-Large community but in the Internet community generally. So, I'm excited for what the future holds. I apologize. I'm going to be dragged out of here momentarily, which is why I got to go first. But thank you so much, and I appreciate the work that you do.

HADIA ELMINIAWI:

Thank you, Jonathan, and I hand the floor now to Alan. Alan, the floor is yours.

ALAN BARRETT:

Thank you very much, Hadiya. This is Alan Barrett, ICANN board member. It's always a pleasure to attend these meetings. It's great that the Afro-Hello and AfrICANN community organizes this at almost every ICANN meeting, and you always have a good statement prepared. Yeah, I think I agree with Jonathan. It's very impressive to see such a high-level of activity, and I've looked at the statement about artificial intelligence. There are lots of good ideas in there.

Some of them may be easier to implement than others, but they're all worth looking at and considering. I'd like to say that I'm very pleased that I'm no longer the only African person on the ICANN board. We now have Catherine Adeya as well, and so, yeah, I'm glad she can be here as well. Then just a word about AfriNIC. Everybody who's involved in the Internet community in Africa is probably concerned about what's going on with AfriNIC, and there's not that much information available on the current status. I'm aware that there's some court proceedings, but they're not really published. So, all I can say is that ICANN shares your concern if you're worried about AfriNIC, so is ICANN, and ICANN will do what it can to help. Thanks.

HADIA ELMINIAWI:

Thank you, Alan, and now I hand it over to Dr. Catherine.

CATHERINE ADEYA:

Thank you very much. I hope I'm clear enough, and welcome. I use which one? Is that better? Perfect. So, thank you very much, and a welcome to all the people who are online as well. Yes, so I'm five months in the board, but have over 20 years' experience in this area.

Very welcome topic, and the reason why I say it's a welcome topic and I know I only have four minutes is it's an area I'm also passionate about. In the last month alone, I have been invited to speak at meetings, one on AI and its potential in Africa, another one on the role of AI and emerging tech in the governance in Africa, AI and the potential of digital transformation in Africa.

I'm just saying three areas I've been asked to speak in the last one month. So, this one itself is unique, but very similar, and worth talking about. So, I think it's very timely, with a focus on DNS management in Africa. Yes, the opportunities are evident, and even looking at the statements, the challenges are increasingly clear, in my view. The impact may be hard to measure, or may not be very well addressed, but it may be there as well. And some of the asks, when I look at the topic again, not just in Africa, but yet they're still very key for us. How to protect the DNS infrastructure and user from cyber threats.

That's one of the things I found myself discussing in the last one month. How do we maintain reliability amidst the increasing phishing, malware, DDoS, and data infiltration? So, maybe I'll conclude, and then I'll open up. Maybe I might give another comment later. But for the last two years, I don't know how many of you are aware that there's been a major push to encourage more Africans to acquire AI skills and data science, and even the development of a strong pipeline, or a strong talent pipeline in many institutions is completely lacking. And the push I know has collectively come from the AU, from Smart Africa, and a number of institutions.

Two years ago, there was even an ask about encouraging AI centers of excellence to assist in incubating this kind of ideas. I'm aware that there's one in the process right now, and I'm sure they'll welcome some of the things we're doing here at ICANN. So, maybe let that be my introductory remarks. Thank you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI:

Thank you so much, Catherine. And I'm happy to announce that Sally Costerton, Interim President and CEO of ICANN, has just joined us. Thank you for being with us. And the floor is yours.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Thank you very much, Hadia. I apologize for being slightly late. Well, firstly, I would really like to congratulate you on this statement. I found it absolutely fascinating. It's extremely comprehensive. That's the main thing that struck me. There's an enormous amount of work that has gone into this. So, I'm looking forward to this session and to us discussing it, but I really wanted to recognize and know how long these things take to do. And as Catherine says, this is a big topic.

And it's some of the subsets of the content you have. I mean, these are huge issues. These are huge opportunities. But they raise a lot of questions as well as some answers. So, you asked me, first of all, I'd like to thank you for inviting me to participate. And I've quite often come and met with you when we've been at ICANN meetings, and I always really enjoy hearing from you. So, thank you so much. And I know this is a specific focus today on the statement on artificial intelligence. I do appreciate the analysis, as I say and particularly thinking about, of

course, we've just published the updated DNS study for Africa. And I'm very interested in your comments in the statement, but also probably in this meeting about what does AI, you know, this focus on the DNS, what I would be very interested in understanding from you is priorities, because you have quite a lot of issues in this statement.

They cover quite a wide range of areas. But whether you think there are particular areas that we really should be prioritizing at ICANN over others, I would find that very helpful. But thank you for bringing this. This group has always been very forward-looking in my experience, and I really applaud you for that. I think you're a role model in ICANN. You grab big issues that are coming towards us, and you take the time to think about them and discuss them and work on them before we come to ICANN meetings. I think this is best practice. I really do congratulate you. Because one of the things we have to do at ICANN is, frankly, we have to look around corners. And there's a lot of different kinds of corners we have to look around at ICANN, but this is definitely, definitely a big one.

As you know, we are committed at ICANN to promoting digital inclusivity in Africa. And you heard me, if any of you were in the opening ceremony and you heard my speech, I talked about it very specifically in the speech. And we have been expanding by the reach of the Coalition for Digital Africa with new partners. And as I said in the speech, we now have programs in 26 countries in Africa up and running, and more in the pipeline. And many of you in this group are involved in those projects. And I would encourage you and I would invite you to have a look at what's going on. ICANN has its own mini website, as well as pages on the ICANN website.

And if there are projects, you're interested in, if there are new partners that you think we should be looking at, who have already got capacity development programs that you would like to see be part of the coalition, do let Pierre and his team know. Because we are very interested in building on the good work that we've already done. And this area, I think, of this statement and the discussions and the thoughts that it provokes, actually is very interesting, I think, and Catherine is making the point, there's a lot of this interest already in our global community. I think this could be an area where we may find there are new projects and new partners that we might want to look at to be part of the coalition as part of your dialogue about what we do next and what you want to prioritize. So, I just want to offer that as a consideration.

I think most of you are aware of this, but that as part of ICANN's commitment to improving the DNS infrastructure in Africa, which we're obviously focused on, the two new IMRS instances, that's ICANN Managed Root Servers, which we used to call the L-Root, but we now call IMRS, will reduce the impact of potential cyber-attacks on Africa, should the root server system be attacked.

With two separate instances now, one in Nairobi and one in Cairo, we are generating higher bandwidth and data processing capacity, and that is helping us with the risk of attack, as well as providing more resilience to the Internet users in those countries, in partnership with the ISPs on the ground, on the routing of the traffic. But we're seeing some very nice statistics coming out of the performance since those two clusters went in. So, I think, really, that was all I wanted to say. I don't

want to use up lots of time. So, where would you like me to go next, Hadia? I'll give the floor back to you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI:

Thank you so much, Sally, and I like how you mentioned priorities, and I think this is something we could add to the statement. With that, I go to the introduction of the topic and to our panel holders. The floor is yours. Leon, I'm sorry. So, let's go now to Leon Sanchez. And apologies, Leon. Yeah, the floor is yours.

LEÓN FELIPE SÁNCHEZ:

Thank you very much, Hadia. And I'm going to keep it short because I know that we're already running over time. So, as usual, it's a pleasure to be here with you. Thank you for having me again, for inviting me, for constantly considering me to be in these meetings. You know, this is one of the sessions I never miss in ICANN meetings, and I really like to be here with you. I just have to echo what my colleagues have said and what Sally was saying just a minute ago. It's incredible to see how AFRALO continues to be a very forward-thinking, a visionary community in our ecosystem.

I've read through the paper that you have put together the statement in relation to artificial intelligence and the opportunities in the DNS, the challenges, the trends, the opportunities, what's to come in the near future. And I have to say that I am greatly amazed and satisfactorily amazed to see the work that you have input into this paper. So, without further ado, I just wish you the best of deliberations in the discussion of

this paper and happy to follow on the topic with a lot of interest. Thank you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI: Thank you, Leon. You've always been a great support to this community. Thank you so much. Pierre, the floor is now yours.

PIERRE DANDJINOU: Thank you very much, Hadia. I think not much to say. I'm always happy to be here and also glad that you actually are tackling this issue. It's quite important. As far as we are concerned, I mean, GSE, GSE Africa, and for this, I will say, but Sally mentioned it, this study that we are actually finalizing on the DNS market in Africa, a few things are there that really echo what you are saying.

You were talking about data integrity, for instance. One of the things that we are finding now is it's quite important to have those data. And how do you do this? And you also mentioned so many issues pertaining to different demands, especially the security issue. And, yeah, so those potential that you are citing here, they are there. And Sally put it quite well. Again, it's about the priority. What do you prioritize here? It's important.

We can't be doing everything here. Maybe I will finish by what I took away from this. They concluded a mobile world conference in Barcelona where this artificial intelligence was a key theme there. And we saw many, many applications, but the bulk of the reflection there was that, well, this area, although there are so many things happening,

although there are so many potentials there, probably we might need to put stress on one or two things. And when it comes to Africa, basically it's about collaboration. I noticed that, well, we do have a private sector there, government.

They were also there, and the users. And the conclusion was that, well, we need to really be working in collaboration. So, the call, our call for you, of course, is about joining forces in what we are doing. And I also noticed, and I was the minister of, well, digitization of Kigali, I mean of Rwanda, that was stressing on that, which is about the talents, the skills that you need to build in that field. That's something that you could add to your work here. So, yeah, thanks. That's what I have to share. Thank you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI:

Thank you so much. And you mentioned data-driven insights, security, talents, and skill building. And I think those are all very important to us and are highlighted also in the statement. And now we go to the introduction of the topic and to our pen holders. So, the floor is yours.

SAMUEL KINUTHIA KARIUKI:

Thank you. For the record, my name is Samuel Kinuthia Kariuki. I'm one of the pen holders who participated in drafting this joint AFRALO-AfriCANN statement on AI and AI-powered tools in the service of DNS management in Africa. This topic received the highest number of votes among members of AFRALO. We believe that with the advancement of AI and AI-powered tools, this will become essential in the management of DNS in Africa.

We looked at topics ranging from the current state of DNS management in Africa, how AI can be used in DNS management, the various opportunities and challenges in AI-powered DNS management, the implementation of AI in DNS management in Africa. And I believe the team will narrow down to the opportunities that we should focus on. I would like to hand over to my other pen holders to make their comments, if any. Thank you. Back to you, Hadia.

HADIA ELMINIAWI:

Okay, thank you so much for this introduction. And let's go now to the statement itself. And Abdul Jalil Bashar is going to read the same sentence for us. Statement.

ABDELDJALIL BACHAR BONG: AbdelJalil, here. Thank you, Hadia. I'll be reading in French. The statement is a bit long, so please bear with us. We, the members of the African ICANN community, who actively participated in ICANN79 and attended the joint AFRALO-African meeting on Wednesday, March 6, 2024, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, engaged in a comprehensive discussion regarding AI, artificial intelligence, and AI-powered tools in the service of DNS management in Africa, opportunities, challenges, and impacts. Artificial intelligence has significantly shaped today's landscape across various sectors, influencing how we live, how we work, how we interact with technology. AI has become an integral part of our modern landscape, driving innovation, improving efficiency, and influencing various aspects of our daily lives and industries.

Through its impact on the domain names industry, it brings opportunities as well as many challenges as follows. One, the current state of DNS management in Africa. As of the last quarter of 2023, Africa's domain name system, DNS, landscape is marked by a diverse array of 54 country code top-level domains, ccTLDs, and six internationalized domain names, IDNs. Alongside city-specific codes such as .Capetown, .Durban, .Joburg. Over the past seven years, African ccTLDs have witnessed significant growth, expanding by 21%. The most recent data from the 2023 Africa Domain Name Industry Study by ICANN, reveals a total of 4.3 million ccTLD registrations.

Concurrently, African entities actively participate in the global domain space, contributing approximately 1.4 million registrations in generic top-level domains, gTLDs. Beyond mere domain registrations, the DNS infrastructure in Africa incorporates the presence of ICANN, ICANN-managed root servers, and other root server instances, underscoring the importance of a resilient and distributed DNS infrastructure. To enhance DNS security, there is a concerted focus on implementing measures against common threats such as DNS spoofing and distributed denial-of-service, DDoS, attacks, with an examination of the adoption of DNS security extensions, that's DNSSEC. Regulatory frameworks and governance structures play crucial roles and are guided by both regional and international bodies like ICANN.

Despite persistent challenges in DNS management, including infrastructural limitations and cybersecurity concerns, there are ongoing opportunities for improvement, collaboration, and innovation that continue to shape the DNS landscape in Africa. Looking ahead, emerging trends in DNS management, technological advancements,

and evolving policies are poised to impact the future of the DNS ecosystem on the continent.

2. Introduction to AI and DNS management. In Africa's rapidly evolving DNS management landscape, the integration of artificial intelligence, AI, and AI-powered tools is a promising catalyst presenting both opportunities and challenges. Tailored AI algorithms designed for African networks are poised to improve security by detecting anomalies and strengthening defenses against common cyber threats. Predictive analysis will ensure that traffic flows optimally while accommodating the region's diverse network conditions. Implementing automated DNS record management will address operational issues, reduce manual errors, and improve overall operational efficiency.

AI-driven performance optimization will help to deliver a more responsive user experience, which is critical in regions with varying connectivity. Furthermore, intelligent traffic steering and personalized content delivery will meet the unique requirements of African networks, adapting dynamically to emerging trends. Adaptive DNS security policies will respond proactively to emerging threats, strengthening the digital infrastructure. The impact on DNS management in Africa will be transformative, resulting in enhanced security, performance, and personalized digital experiences. These advancements collectively lay the groundwork for a resilient and efficient DNS ecosystem that meets the specific needs of the African technological landscape.

3. Opportunities in AI-powered DNS management AI-powered DNS management will open up a world of possibilities that will have the

potential to transform Africa's network infrastructure landscape. Some of the most appealing benefits will include A, Improved security. B, Predictive Traffic Analysis. C, Automation for Operational Efficiency. D, Intelligent Traffic Steering. E, Data Driven Insights. F, Cost Optimization.

And number 4, Challenges in Implementing AI and DNS Management in Africa. While Artificial Intelligence promises to revolutionize various sectors in Africa, including DNS management, its implementation faces unique challenges. Here's a breakdown of the key hurdles. A, Infrastructure and Connectivity. Limited Internet access, most notably. Then we have a lack of data centers. And B, Data Availability and Quality. Data scarcity is a hurdle as well as data bias. C, Skills and Expertise. On this note, we have a shortage of AI talent and a limited understanding of Artificial Intelligence.

Number 5, Future Trends and Possibilities. The text is a bit long, so I'll just skip ahead to the little letter A, so that's Advanced Predictive Analytics. And then B, Autonomous DNS Operations. Then we have DNS Resolution. A Root DNS Management. Zone Management. Dynamic Updates. DNSSEC Deployment. Anycast Routing. Monitoring and Health Checks. Load Balancing. Policy Enforcement and C, Enhanced Security Measures. D, Integration with Edge Computing. E, Continued Growth Domain Registrations. F, Ethical and Regulatory Considerations and G, Collaborative Initiatives. And we're talking here about collaborative initiatives between African countries, ICANN and technology stakeholders, and they're expected to grow. Joint efforts will address shared challenges and foster knowledge exchange, contributing to a more cohesive and resilient DNS ecosystem.

In conclusion, AI integration in African DNS management holds great promise, yet it requires tackling infrastructure, data, skills, and ethical hurdles. As a key stakeholder, AFRALO is committed to collaborating with ICANN and other key stakeholders to drive transformative progress responsibly for the region's benefit. Thank you for your attention. Haida, you can take it from here.

HADIA ELMINIAWI:

Thank you so much, AbdelJalil. And now we can move to the discussion. And for that, we have Bram, AFRALO Vice Chair. He's going to moderate the discussion. Bram, the floor is yours.

BRAM FUDZULANI:

Thank you, Haida. This is Bram for the record. Yes, so the statement has been read. For those that have comments, I would like to come on the mic. I see there's a hand already from Chokri. Please go ahead. Thank you.

CHOKRI BEN ROMDHANE:

Thank you, Bram, for this opportunity. And thank you also for the draft team for this great effort. And we all know the interest and the impact of those new technologies in our current life, not only in the DNS management system. So, I would like to congratulate my friend Samuel for this great job that he did by developing this statement. But what I would like to mention, and as AbdelJalil has already mentioned, seems that the statement is too long.

If some points are referring to some study or some research proposal, it would be more useful to refer this study or this research in the statement and try to get some abstraction of this output of the research or study outputs. This is the only comment that I have or suggestion. And I would like, again, to congratulate all the draft team for choosing this topic.

BRAM FUDZULANI:

No. Thank you, Chokri, for that input. I'm sure the pen holders are taking note of those observations. I'm not too sure whether there are other comments in the chat room. I could be guided, especially in the room, if there's anyone who would like to come on the mic and make their statement or make their comment from the statement read out.

HADIA ELMINIAWI:

Thank you, Chokri. I will manage the floor here. So, we have Houda. The floor is yours.

HOUDA CHIH:

Hello, everyone. Thank you so much for giving me the mic. So, my name is Houda Chih. I am from Tunisia. I want to know if there are any ongoing projects of the implementation of TechOps, capacity-building programs about artificial intelligence, TechOps, because there is Rwanda and there is some initiative. I want to know if there are any other projects to cover the other African countries to have the same projects. Okay, so is there any ongoing projects of the implementation

of TechOps or excellence centers of artificial intelligence because there is some initiative in Rwanda and--.

CATHERINE ADEYA: Yes, there is, and if you're interested, I could also share some with you. But I know one of the biggest initiatives going on right now is through the Africa Center for Technology Studies, working together with various universities. But then they're narrowing in to try and work on focusing on building a center of excellence for artificial intelligence. I could share with you if you're interested. Yes. But they're in the process. That's why I said they're in the process so I didn't know how much I could say because--, No, no, I'll share with you what is available.

BRAM FUDZULANI: Thank you. Did we have any other hand in the room? I see there's Barack online with his hand up.

HADIA ELMINIAWI: Barack, go ahead.

BARRACK OTIENO: I'm in the room. Thank you. I just used the online facility. Many thanks to the drafters of the statement. Two comments. One, I think this is forward thinking because if we look at the way the DNS has evolved, we are coming from a manual process which was handled by John Postel to an automated process, and I think AI gives us an opportunity to move to the next level. I think with regard to DNS management, probably

there's a lot of also brain drain, a lot of our technicians moving out of the continent for greener pastures after a lot of investment in training, and maybe AI can retain some of these best processes.

The second thing is I've read a lot of news items on exploitation of some of our youth who are developing AI languages that are used by the various operators, and I'm just thinking on a brighter side, could we identify some of these youth because a number of them seem to be from our region and see how we can tap into them as a resource to contribute towards this subject of the DNS that we are discussing. I think they have developed a number of tools which many of us are using to mine or to search for information online, and whereas some of the stories have come up on an unfortunate note, I think there's an opportunity for us to identify them and tap into them and work with our research institutes to see how we can build this conversation, especially with regard to automating DNS processes forward. Thank you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI:

Does anyone want to comment? Also, I wanted to ask about the African Union AI framework that was supposed to be adopted in February. It's almost there. Okay, you can comment on the statement, Catherine.

CATHERINE ADEYA:

I think I'll comment on the statement, Barak, because I do want to comment on yours because there are similar initiatives to what I was telling her where you heard me even talking about the concern of the talent pipeline and how there's now a lot of brain drain and other things, but some of it is not even being drained. It's big tech companies

who are also taking them within the country. But I wanted to just make a comment. I gave my initial comments, but on the statement itself, honestly, congratulations to the team that did this.

A massive amount of work went into this. But to somebody's comment, I believe now that you have this, you can now synthesize it a little more. I think Sally talked about it, and I think we could summarize and focus more on some of the key issues that would be also interesting if you look at what's happening in the African context. I know there's been a lot of talk. The major talk around AI and the concern, whether it's the AU, whether it's the different African countries trying to develop their own frameworks, is the issue of data. You've inferred to it here in the statement, but remember the AI tools depend on the accuracy of DNS data too. You can even pull out some of these things to bring out the issue of better data governance, which has been a challenge to many African countries.

This can also become an opportunity, even if it appears to be a challenge. So, in my view, if you wanted to summarize this statement a little bit, you could actually reduce a lot of, I hope you don't mind me sharing, a lot of the things on the current state of DNS management, the introduction, but dwell a little bit more on the key opportunities, especially those that you can see are quite doable and a few of the challenges. With that, then you can zero in and bring in the issues of collaboration and skills. So, my suggestion to the drafters, this is excellent, but you can reduce a lot of the introductory part and focus the statement. Just summarize it into maybe two or three sentences or four and then dwell more on what the opportunities you see and how we can go over that. Thank you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI:

Thank you, Catherine. This is a very good idea, actually, to cut off a little bit from the introduction and focus more on the opportunities and challenges. And I would say also with regard to the challenges, I think a great focus also needs to be put on governance because we mentioned, and this is really important, the challenges when we mentioned, for example, the intelligent traffic steering.

So, we need also to make sure that we are not favoring specific content, services, or applications over others. This is important. When we also talk about data and monitoring, we should also make sure that we comply with all privacy rights as well. And so, I guess we could also put a little bit of focus as we talk about the opportunities that we have. We need also to put strength on the challenges in relation to governance because those are crucial for the success of AI-powered tools. Aziz, please go ahead.

AZIZ HILALI:

I'm going to speak in French. I want to react after what Catherine said. I wanted to say that again. This is a declaration, a statement that we always redact during this meeting. Those statements will be directed to the board of ICANN. We insisted on the impact of the IA in the DNS, as Barack said it earlier. What he said is important. We are talking about the implementation of the system of the root servers, and we know that AI will have an important role in this.

So, this statement is for ICANN, for leaders of ICANN. We try not to go any further. What I regret is actually I was not part of the team, the

penholder team. I regret that we didn't place priority on what we are asking for, we, the African community, in order to help Africa to get better. And I also want to respond to what Barack said when he talked about our engineers, our experts in technology who are leaving the country, what we call the brain drain. We cannot take their passport in hostage. So, our new solution is to add more talent and to place priority on higher education in Africa, in the universities of Africa. Everything tomorrow will be based on those technologies, on AI. So, Africa should put more priority on the education, on the new technology, on AI, on the cloud, et cetera.

HADIA ELMINIAWI:

Thank you, Aziz. And I actually put some notes here. So, I put prioritization. This is something we will add to the statement. Collaboration, we have it in there, but we could also highlight it a little bit more. I have put also referencing studies and research material and also focusing a little bit on governance challenges as we talk about the opportunities. So, those are some items which I put in there in order so that we can actually amend. And Houda, you wanted to say something?

HOUDA CHIH:

I want to speak French. I want to add something. We should also ask for the help of the African experts in order to lead the projects, technical projects, to maybe open some doors for the young people.

CATHERINE ADEYA: Actually, one of the links is in the public domain, so I'm going to share it with her, the one I was talking about, the AI4D Africa Scholarship Project. And they've written how many PhD students they're targeting, early career researchers, female researchers. And this is the one I was talking, the pipeline that they're producing, some of the graduates. I think some of these could be examples of potential collaborative efforts because their universities are Pan-African and this is where more people can maybe figure out how to join in because they'll always struggle. If you're doing the scholarships, they'll always struggle, I guess, for funding. But here is a real example, and I'll share it in case anybody's not aware.

HADIA ELMINIAWI: Thank you, Catherine, for that. And so, I've also put an item on skills and retaining skills and also making use, I would say, from Africans that are abroad. So, if we're losing our skills here in Africa, that doesn't mean that we can't also make use of Africans who are abroad. So, Tijani?

TIJANI BEN JEMAA: Thank you, Hadia. I hear you. Yes, we have to prioritize, but when doing that, please think about things that are in the remit of ICANN so that since we will send the statement to the board, they are interested in what they can do. So, in our prioritization, we have to take into account this issue. Thank you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI: Thank you, Tijani. And I don't see any.

BRAM FUDZULANI: Hadia?

MICHELLE DESMYTER: Hadia?

HADIA ELMINIAWI: Yes, we do have a question in the Q&A pod?

MICHELLE DESMYTER: We have a question from Joel Okamole. Hello, this is Joel, and congratulations to all the delegates representing AFRALO. My question to the panel, what is the status in other continents beyond Africa? Are AI tools deployed, and what are the major gains?

HADIA ELMINIAWI: So, I'm not sure who would answer this, but I can talk a little bit about the landscape, the AI regulatory landscape worldwide. So, if we look at Africa, we have Tunisia, South Africa, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, and, of course, the African Union. They have all come up or developed AI frameworks. And then the EU, of course. There's the EU AI Act. And the UK, they also, they do not plan to adopt new legislation to regulate AI, but would instead require existing regulations in the UK to be responsible for AI in their sectors.

The G7, they agreed on an AI code of conduct for companies. There's the US executive order to enable wide-ranging regulation of AI. So, this is like China, of course. So, this is like a quick look at the landscape itself. And we can talk about many of the applications, actually, that have been adopted worldwide. Just give me a minute. I'll pull it up. So, of course, AI has been used in powering content moderation and social media. And that comes, of course, with many challenges. Optimized internet traffic management, that also has been used worldwide. Bandwidth prioritization and net neutrality, also, those are applications that have been adopted worldwide. So, I don't know, Chokri, please go ahead.

CHOKRI BEN ROMDHANE:

Thank you, Hadia. I would like just to reply to Tijani and Aziz. This is a question about what we are targeting since I am a member of the draft team. And what we are targeting is by the statement. I would like just to remind that the statement is only targeting the ICANN board. It's also the tools in order to outreach the community. So, I personally ask this question about what we are asking the board. But I have got the conviction that publishing this statement and share this statement with the community member is also very useful.

We all know that the DNS management is not only in the scope of the ICANN, but the board could suggest or recommend the use of DNS management tools based on artificial intelligence or in blockchain DNS system to their registry or to their community. So, it's not only targeting the board, but also the tools to outreach our community about the

artificial intelligence usability and how we can use it in our DNS management. Thank you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI:

Thank you so much, Chokri. And I guess also Jonathan mentioned before the applicant support. So, maybe we can look at certain applications within the ICANN work and see how we can actually incorporate if any artificial intelligence applications there. So, to summarize, because we are at the top of the hour, the points that will need to be edited further. We will be referencing studies and research materials, pressing more on the challenges, putting the priorities, pressing also on collaboration, skills development.

Anything else? So, with that, I guess the statement is not going to be adopted today. We will amend it and repost it on the list in order to get your approval. Okay. So, any other business? Yeah. Okay. So, we reached the end of our meeting today. And with that, I would like to thank you for joining this session and to invite you all to our region, Africa, for the ICANN80 meeting in Kigali, Rwanda. So, we hope to see you all there. And I guess that's it for today. And this meeting is adjourned. Thank you all.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]